

Working Across the Grades: A Panel Discussion

Grade 9 Applied Mathematics
Conference – August 2016
Toronto & London, ON

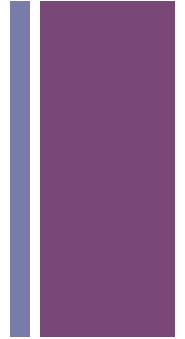
+ What do we mean by “working across the grades” ?

1. Team members came from “across the grades”

- every team had at least one Grade 9 Applied math teacher, many also had Grade 10 – 12 teachers
- one team had Grade 9 Applied, Grades 10-12 and a Grade 7 & 8 teacher in Yr 1 of project, *and then* in Yr 2 team invited one more Grade 7 & 8 teacher and two Grade 6 teachers at feeder schools to invite them to participate

WOW – that’s a Grade 6 – 12 learning community!!

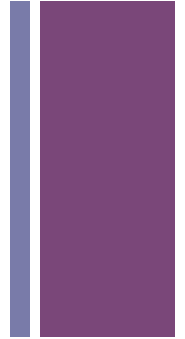
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2. Importing an approach from elementary grades

- a team borrowed a 4-block problem approach from their elementary panel to use with students in Gr 9 Applied
- a team borrowed ways of grouping students for problem solving
- elementary panel in a feeder school had been using low-floor, high ceiling questions and one Gr 9 Applied team imported this idea into their work
- some secondary team members had greater appreciation for importance of getting to know students and their needs after dialogue and seeing approaches used by elementary teachers

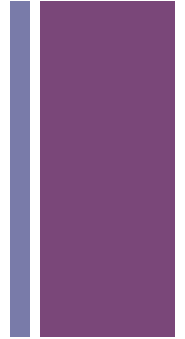
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3. Exporting an idea developed for Grade 9 Applied math to other grades:

- a team re-ordered the Gr 9 Applied course in the project and then extended that order to Gr 10 Applied
- several teams began using vertical whiteboards in Gr 9 Applied & these ended up being used in many grades
- rich tasks used in Gr 9 Applied were subsequently used in Grades 10-12 and also in Grades 7 & 8 – though sometimes for a different math goal

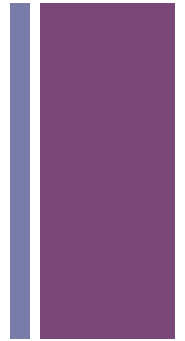
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4. Taking steps to build coherence and consistency:

- working to use common vocabulary/terminology across grades (eg. a Grade 6 teacher began calling a T-chart a Table of Values; increasing or decreasing rates/rate of change/slope; translations, reflections & rotations vs. flips, slides & turns etc.)
- emphasizing similar skills across grades such as explaining your thinking, working collaboratively etc.
- extended work on Pythagorean theorem from Gr 8 teachers into Gr 9, using area of squares rather than just formula
- one team worked to sequence the Grade 9 Applied & Academic courses in similar ways to facilitate students moving from one course to the other, when needed

+ Sharing experiences with working “across the grades”



- Did “working across the grades” shift your thinking about math concepts and/or processes in the curriculum? In what ways?
- Did “working across the grades” have an influence on your classroom practice? In what ways?
- In what ways do you think “working across the grades” has been beneficial for your students?
- What challenges did you encounter when “working across the grades” in the Grade 9 OAME project?